

Message Text

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70

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00 FCC-02

INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-05 USIA-15 COME-00 BIB-01 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8437

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, CA, US

SUBJ: TELEVISION POLICY QUESTION

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF CP ITEM BY KEVIN DOYLE, DATELINED
WASHINGTON, DISTRIBUTED AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 6:

BEGIN TEXT. RICHARD WILEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC), WILL HEAD A TOP-LEVEL
U.S. DELEGATION TO OTTAWA NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS CANADA'S
CONTROVERSIAL CABLE TV POLICIES.

UNLESS SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IS MADE, U.S. SOURCES SAID,
TV STATIONS IN BUFFALO WILL LIKELY BE GIVEN PERMISSION
TO JAM THEIR SIGNALS NOW BEING RECEIVED IN CANADA.
AN FCC INFORMANT SAID TUESDAY WILEY HAD DECIDED PERSONALLY
TO ATTEND THE MEETING, SET FOR NEXT TUESDAY, BECAUSE OF
"INTENSE AND GROWING" PRESSURE BEING EXERTED ON THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT TO TRY TO FORCE CHANGES IN THE CANADIAN
POLICY.

SOURCES SAID WILEY WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR
STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

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CANADIANS ATTENDING THE MEETING ARE LIKELY TO

INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION COMMISSION (CRTC) AND PERHAPS CABINET MINISTERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE CABLE ISSUE.

THE BASIC DISPUTE ARISES FROM AN ORDER BY THE CRTC, THE FEDERAL BROADCASTING REGULATORY AGENCY, TO SOME CANADIAN CABLE SYSTEMS TO DELETE COMMERCIALS FROM PROGRAMS CARRIED INTO CANADA FROM U.S. BORDER TV STATIONS.

THE LAST FORMAL MEETING ON THE ISSUE WAS HELD HERE LAST SUMMER BETWEEN WILEY AND PIERRE JUNEAU, FORMER CRTC CHAIRMAN. SOURCES SAID THE SESSION WAS HEATED, WITH NEITHER OFFICIAL GIVING AN INCH.

SINCE THEN, TV STATIONS IN BUFFALO HAVE FORMALLY APPLIED TO THE FCC FOR PERMISSION TO JAM THEIR SIGNALS GOING TO CANADA FOR A TRIAL PERIOD IN RETALIATION FOR THE CRTC'S ORDER.

THE FCCC HAS INDICATED THE APPLICATION IS IN ORDER AND THAT IT WOULD BE MECHANICALLY FEASIBLE TO BLOCK THE SIGNALS.

INFORMANTS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT WILEY AND OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS HAVE DELIBERATELY DELAYED ACTING ON THE REQUEST UNTIL AFTER THE OTTAWA DISCUSSIONS. BUT UNLESS NEXT WEEK'S MEETING IS STATISFACTORY, THEY SAID, THE TV STATIONS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE GIVEN A GO-AHEAD.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAD SAID THE CABLE POLICY IS INTENDED TO DIVERT SOME OF THE \$20 MILLION SPENT ANNUALLY BY DOMESTIC ADVERTISERS ON U.S. TV STATIONS BACK TO CANADIAN STATIONS.

FCC INFORMANTS SAID THAT WHILE THE CANADIANS ARE AGREEABLE TO A MEETING ON CABLE, THEY SEEM COOL TO SUGGESTIONS THAT ANY BASIC CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE IN THE POLICY.

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"WE'RE HOPING FOR MORE THAN JUST A PROTOCOL GET-TOGETHER," SAID ONE OFFICIAL. "BUT WE HAVEN'T BEEN GIVEN MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT." END TEXT.
JOHNSON

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